

فَصِيلَةُ عَوَارِ الْجَمْرِ

# **The Poem: The Epitome of Wisdom**

Written by:

**Abul-Fath al-Busti (d. 400 H.)**

Translated by:

**Faisal bin Abdul Qadir bin Hassan  
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DARUSSANAFI



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<sup>1</sup> The Arabic copy used for the translation is the copy of the poem verified by Shaikh Abdul-Muhsin al-Qasim in level four of the *Mutoon Taalib ul-'Ilm* series (pg. 65-78)

## A Brief Biography of the Author

The author's name is Abul-Fath 'Ali bin Muhammad bin Hussain al-Busti (may Allah have mercy upon him). He was born in the year 330 H. in the area of Bust, which is present day Lashkargah in Afghanistan. He studied with a number of notable Scholars in the area, most famously Abu Haatim Muhammad bin Hibban (may Allah have mercy upon him). From his students were Abu Abdullah al-Haakim (may Allah have mercy upon him) and Abu Uthmaan as-Saabooni (may Allah have mercy upon him). He was praised for his virtue, knowledge, and poetry. He died around the year 400 H.

'Allamah Ath-Tha'alibi, his contemporary (may Allah have mercy upon him), said: **"He used to amaze me with his wonderful poetry and marvelous composition"**.<sup>2</sup>

Imam as-Sam'aani (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: **"...the author, the brilliant writer. He was unique in his time in terms of virtue, knowledge, poetry, and writing"**.<sup>3</sup>

Imam Ibnul-Jawzi (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: **"He was an illustrious poet"**.<sup>4</sup>

Imam adh-Dhahabi (may Allah have mercy upon him) said about him: **"The Scholar, the poet of his time"**.<sup>5</sup>

He also said: **"Abul-Fath al-Busti, Ali bin Muhammad, the writer, the poet of his time and author of his region"**.<sup>6</sup>

Hafidh Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: **"Abul-Fath al-Busti, a well-known poet. He has a very good and strong *Diwan* . . ."**<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Yateema ad-Dahr* (4/345)

<sup>3</sup> *Al-Ansaab* (2/226)

<sup>4</sup> *al-Muntadham* (14/231)

<sup>5</sup> *Siyar 'Alaam an-Nubalaa* (17/148)

<sup>6</sup> *al-'Ibar fi Khabr man Ghabr* (3/77/78)

<sup>7</sup> *al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah* (11/278)

The historian Yaaqut al-Hamawi (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: **“Abul-Fath ‘Ali bin Muhammad, and it was said he is the son of Ahmad, bin al-Hussain bin Muhammad bin ‘Abdul-Aziz al-Busti. He was a poet, a writer, and an author of paronomasia. He heard from Abu Haatim Bin Hibban. Abu Abdullah al-Haakim reported from him. He died in Bukharah in the year 400 H.”**<sup>8</sup>

### **The Importance of this Poem**

‘Allamah al-Maneeni ad-Dimashqi (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: **“The most famous of his poetry (i.e. of Abul-Fath) was the *Nooniyyah* of similitudes. The People of Arab Literature loved to memorize the poem and relay it. And the people had concern for it until even the children memorized it in the primary schools”**<sup>9</sup>

### **The Title of the Poem**

Some of the Scholars referred to the poem as *Nooniyyah al-Busti* (نونية البستي). However, Taj ud-deen as-Subki (may Allah have mercy upon him) referred to it as *The Epitome of Wisdom* (عنوان الحكم) in his work *Tabaqaat ash-Shaafi’yyatul-Kubrah*.<sup>10</sup> This is the name that it is most commonly known as.

Shaikh Abdurrazzaq al-Badr (may Allah preserve him) said: **“It is known as *The Epitome of Wisdom* due to what it encompasses of great, comprehensive, beneficial wisdom”**.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Mu’jam al-Buldaan* (1/41)

<sup>9</sup> *al-Fath al-Wahbi ‘ala Tareekh Abi Nasr al-Utbi* (1/68)

<sup>10</sup> (5/192)

<sup>11</sup> *Sharh ‘Unwaan al-Hikam* tape (no. 1)

**The Text of the Poem:**

زِيَادَةُ الْمَرْءِ فِي دُنْيَاهُ نَقْصَانٌ \*\* وَرِبْحُهُ غَيْرَ مُحْضٍ الْخَيْرِ خُسْرَانٌ

1. The increase of a person in his worldly life is decrease  
And his profit, besides pure good, is loss

وَكُلُّ وَجْدَانٍ حَظٌّ لَا ثَبَاتَ لَهُ \*\* فَإِنَّ مَعْنَاهُ فِي التَّحْقِيقِ فَقْدَانٌ

2. And everything that is coveted has no permanency  
For verily its meaning in reality is absence

يَا عَامِراً لَخَرَابِ الدَّهْرِ مُجْتَهِداً \*\* تَاللَّهِ هَلْ لَخَرَابِ الدَّهْرِ عُمْرَانٌ

3. O diligent builder of what will be ruined by the passing of time  
By Allah, is the ruining of one's life [considered] building?

وَيَا حَرِيصاً عَلَى الْأَمْوَالِ يَجْمَعُهَا \*\* أَنْسَيْتَ أَنَّ سُرُورَ الْمَالِ أَحْزَانٌ

4. O one who is eager to collect wealth  
Have you forgotten that the happiness of wealth is sadness

زَعِ الْفَوَادَ عَنِ الدُّنْيَا وَزُخْرُفِهَا \*\* فَصَفُّوْهَا كَدَرٌ وَالْوَصْلُ هِجْرَانٌ

5. Hold back the heart from the worldly life and its adornment  
Its purity is murky and connection [to it] is abandonment

وَأَرَعَ سَمْعَكَ أَمْثَالاً أَفْصَلُهَا \*\* كَمَا يُفْصَلُ يَاقُوتٌ وَمَرْجَانٌ

6. And be attentive in listening to the similitudes that I clarify  
Just like how rubies and coral are clarified

أَحْسِنُ إِلَى النَّاسِ تَسْتَعِبِدُ قُلُوبَهُمْ \*\* فَطَالَمَا اسْتَعْبَدَ الْإِنْسَانُ إِحْسَانُ

7. Treat the people well and you will enslave<sup>12</sup> their hearts  
How often does good treatment enslave people

وَأِنْ أَسَاءَ مُسِيءٌ فَلَيْكُنْ لَكَ فِي \*\* عُرُوضِ زَلَّتِهِ صَفْحٌ وَغُفْرَانُ

8. And if a wrong doer treats you badly then be towards  
His temporary mistake pardoning and forgiving

وَكُنْ عَلَى الدَّهْرِ مِعْوَانًا لِذِي أَمَلٍ \*\* يَرْجُو نَدَاكَ فَإِنَّ الْحُرَّ مِعْوَانُ

9. And be throughout the passing of time a support for the one hopes (for  
your help)  
And desires your generosity. For verily the best of people are supporters  
(of others)

وَأَشْدُدْ يَدَيْكَ بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ مُعْتَصِمًا \*\* فَإِنَّهُ الرُّكْنُ إِنْ خَانَتْكَ أَرْكَانُ

10. And fasten your hands upon the rope of Allah tightly  
For verily it is the retreat when all other retreats betray you

مَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يُحْمَدُ فِي عَوَاقِبِهِ \*\* وَيَكْفِيهِ شَرٌّ مَنْ عَزُّوا وَمَنْ هَانُوا

11. Whoever fears Allah, he will be praised at the end  
And he will be sufficed from the evil of the one who is honourable and the  
one who is humiliated

مَنْ اسْتَعَانَ بِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فِي طَلَبٍ \*\* فَإِنَّ نَاصِرَهُ عَجْزٌ وَخِذْلَانُ

12. Whoever seeks assistance with other than Allah in pursuit (of something)  
Then verily his helper is incapable and forsaking

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<sup>12</sup> Shaikh Abdurrazzaq al-Badr (may Allah preserve him) said that the word enslave used here is not the best of wordings. Instead, the word incline should be used as the word enslave implies that a person will become a slave to another person. In reality, everyone is the slave of Allah, the Exalted [See: *Sharh 'Unwaan al-Hikam* tape ( no. 1)]

مَنْ كَانَ لِلْخَيْرِ مَنَاعًا فَلَيْسَ لَهُ \*\* عَلَى الْحَقِيقَةِ إِخْوَانٌ وَأُخْدَانُ

13. Whoever is a hinderer of good, then he does not have  
In reality any companions or friends

مَنْ جَادَ بِالْمَالِ مَالَ النَّاسِ قَاطِبَةً \*\* إِلَيْهِ وَالْمَالُ لِلْإِنْسَانِ فَتَانُ

14. Whoever is generous in spending wealth, then all the people will incline  
to him  
And the wealth for people is a great trial

مَنْ سَالَمَ النَّاسَ يَسْلَمَ مِنْ غَوَائِلِهِمْ \*\* وَعَاشَ وَهُوَ قَرِيرُ الْعَيْنِ جَذْلَانُ

15. Whoever is peaceful with people he will be safe from their evil  
And he will live in tranquility and be joyous

مَنْ كَانَ لِلْعَقْلِ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَيْهِ غَدَا \*\* وَمَا عَلَى نَفْسِهِ لِلْحَرِصِ سُلْطَانُ

16. Whoever gives his intellect authority it will be [in control]  
And eagerness (for wealth) will not have any authority over his soul

مَنْ مَدَّ طَرْفًا لِفَرْطِ الْجَهْلِ نَحْوَ هَوَى \*\* أَغْضَى عَلَى الْحَقِّ يَوْمًا وَهُوَ خَزْيَانُ

17. Whoever extends his sight out of excessive ignorance towards desire  
Will turn away from the truth one day and he will be degraded

مَنْ عَاشَرَ النَّاسَ لَاقَى مِنْهُمْ نَصَبًا \*\* لِأَنَّ سُوسَهُمْ بَغْيٌ وَعُدْوَانُ

18. Whoever mingles with people will experience fatigue due to them  
Because their nature is transgression and tyranny

وَمَنْ يُفْتَشْ عَنِ الْإِخْوَانِ يَقْلِهِمْ \*\* فَجُلُّ إِخْوَانِ هَذَا الْعَصْرِ خَوَّانُ

19. And whoever examines (his) brothers, he will dislike them  
For verily most brothers in this time period are treacherous

مَنْ اسْتَشَارَ صُرُوفَ الدَّهْرِ قَامَ لَهُ \*\* عَلَى حَقِيقَةِ طَبْعِ الدَّهْرِ بُرْهَانُ

20. Whoever consults historical events will establish for himself  
Clear evidence of the reality of time

مَنْ يَزْرِعُ الشَّرَّ يَحْصُدُ فِي عَوَاقِبِهِ \*\* نَدَامَةً وَلِحَصْدِ الزَّرْعِ إِبَّانُ

21. Whoever sows evil will harvest its outcome  
Regretfully and every harvest has its due time

مَنْ اسْتَنَامَ إِلَى الْأَشْرَارِ نَامَ وَفِي \*\* قَمِيصِهِ مِنْهُمْ صَلٌّ وَتُعْبَانُ

22. Whoever accompanies evil people, then he will sleep  
And find in his shirt, from them, a cobra and snake

كُنْ رَيِّقَ الْبَشْرِ إِنَّ الْخُرَّ هِمَّتُهُ \*\* صَحِيفَةً وَعَلَيْهَا الْبَشْرُ عُتْوَانُ

23. Be cheerful in countenance as it is the concern of the best of people  
(His face) is like a page with cheerfulness its title

وَرَافِقِ الرَّفْقِ فِي كُلِّ الْأُمُورِ فَلَمْ \*\* يَنْدَمْ رَفِيقٌ وَلَمْ يَذْمُمْهُ إِنْسَانُ

24. And hold fast to leniency in all affairs  
For the lenient one does not regret [his leniency] nor do people disparise  
him

وَلَا يَغُرَّنَكَ حَظُّ جَرِّهِ خَرْقٌ \*\* فَالْخَرْقُ هَذَمٌ وَرِفْقُ الْمَرْءِ بُنْيَانُ

25. And do not be deluded by a share of the worldly life obtained through  
harshness  
For harshness is destruction and a person's leniency is construction

أَحْسِنْ إِذَا كَانَ إِمْكَانٌ وَمَقْدِرَةٌ \*\* فَلَنْ يَدُومَ عَلَى الْإِحْسَانِ إِمْكَانُ

26. Have Ihsaan if its possible and (you are) capable  
For the ability to have Ihsan (in something) does not last forever



فَالرَّوْضُ يَزْدَانُ بِالْأَنْوَارِ فَاعِظَةً \*\* وَالْحُرُّ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ يَزْدَانُ

27. The meadow increases (in beauty) with the presence of fragrant flowers  
And the best of people increases (in goodness) through justice and Ihsaan

صُنْ حُرَّ وَجْهِكَ لَا تَهْتِكْ غِلَاقَهُ \*\* فَكُلُّ حُرٍّ لِحُرِّ الْوَجْهِ صَوَّانٌ

28. Protect the radiance of your face, do not tear its delicate dress  
For every good person is protective of the radiance of his face

فَإِنْ لَقِيتَ عَدُوًّا فَالْقُهُ أَبَدًا \*\* وَالْوَجْهُ بِالْبَشْرِ وَالْإِشْرَاقِ غَضَّانٌ

29. If you meet an enemy, then always meet him  
While (your) face is cheerful and its brightness radiant

دَعْ التَّكَاسُلَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ تَطْلُبُهَا \*\* فَلَيْسَ يَسْعَدُ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ كَسَلَانٌ

30. Leave off laziness towards the good deeds which you seek (to perform)  
For the lazy one is not happy with goodness

لَا ظِلٌّ لِلْمَرْءِ يَعْرِى مِنْ تَقَى وَنُهَى \*\* وَإِنْ أَظْلَمَتْهُ أَوْرَاقٌ وَأَفْنَانٌ

31. There is no shade for the person who is naked from piety and  
understanding  
Even if he is shaded by leaves and branches

وَالنَّاسُ أَعْوَانُ مَنْ وَالَتْهُ دَوْلَتُهُ \*\* وَهُمْ عَلَيْهِ إِذَا عَادَتْهُ أَعْوَانُ

32. And people are supporters of the one whom the worldly life turns towards  
him

And if it turns away from him, then they become enemies to him

سَخْبَانُ مَنْ غَيْرِ مَالٍ بِاقِلٍّ حَصْرٌ \*\* وَبَاقِلٌ فِي ثَرَاءٍ الْمَالِ سَخْبَانٌ

33. The eloquent person without wealth is considered mute  
And the mute person who has wealth is considered eloquent

لَا تُودِعِ السِّرَّ وَشَاءَ يَبُوحُ بِهِ \*\* فَمَا رَعَى غَنَمًا فِي الدَّوِّ سَرَحَانُ

34. Do not entrust a secret with a talebearer who will spread it  
Sheep are not pastured in the land of the wolves

لَا تَحْسَبِ النَّاسَ طَبْعًا وَاحِدًا فَلَهُمْ \*\* غَرَائِزُ لَسْتَ تُحْصِيهِنَّ أَلْوَانُ

35. Do not consider the people to be of one nature  
They have dispositions which cannot be enumerated by the colors

مَا كُلُّ مَاءٍ كَصَدَاءِ لِيَوَارِدِهِ \*\* نَعَمْ وَلَا كُلُّ نَبْتٍ فَهُوَ سَعْدَانُ

36. Not all water is like *Sadda*<sup>13</sup> in its taste  
Yes, nor are all plants like *Sa'dan*<sup>14</sup> (in their nutrition)

لَا تَخْدِشَنَّ بِمِطْلٍ وَجْهَ عَارِفَةٍ \*\* فَالْبِرُّ يَخْدِشُهُ مِطْلٌ وَلِيَّانُ

37. Do not scratch the face of good through delay  
For righteous deeds are scratched by delay and procrastination

لَا تَسْتَشِيرْ غَيْرَ نَذْبٍ حَازِمٍ يَقِظُ \*\* قَدْ اسْتَوَى فِيهِ إِسْرَارٌ وَإِعْلَانُ

38. Do not seek counsel except from one who is eager for good, able to  
distinguish affairs, and has intelligence  
Whose private and public affairs are both equal

فَلِلْتَدَابِيرِ فُرْسَانٍ إِذَا رَكَبُوا \*\* فِيهَا أَبْرُوا كَمَا لِلْحَرْبِ فُرْسَانُ

39. For the arrangement of affairs there are knights who if they mount  
To complete a task they will prevail. Just like how for war there are  
knights

<sup>13</sup> It is a well-known water source distinguished for its freshness

<sup>14</sup> It is the name for wild grass which is wholesome and good for camels to graze from

وَلِلْأُمُورِ مَوَاقِيتٌ مُّقَدَّرَةٌ \*\* وَكُلُّ أَمْرٍ لَهُ حَدٌّ وَمِيزَانٌ

40. And for affairs there are appointed times  
And every affair has a fixed boundary and measure

فَلَا تَكُنْ عَجَلًا بِالْأَمْرِ تَطْلُبُهُ \*\* فَلَيْسَ يُحْمَدُ قَبْلَ النَّضْجِ بُحْرَانٌ

41. So do not be hasty in regards to an affair which you seek after  
It is not praiseworthy that sudden recovery occurs before its due time

كَفَى مِنَ الْعَيْشِ مَا قَدْ سَدَّ مِنْ عَوَزٍ \*\* فَفِيهِ لِلْحَرِّ إِنْ حَقَّقْتَ غُنْيَانٌ

42. Sufficient as livelihood is what satisfies one's needs  
In this is sufficiency for the best of people if you attain it

وَذُو الْقَنَاعَةِ رَاضٍ مِنْ مَعِيشَتِهِ \*\* وَصَاحِبُ الْحَرِصِ إِنْ أَثْرَى فَغَضْبَانٌ

43. And the possessor of contentment is pleased with his livelihood  
And the person who is eager (for the worldly life) is angry even if he is  
rich/wealthy

حَسْبُ الْفَتَى عَقْلُهُ خَلَا يُعَاشِرُهُ \*\* إِذَا تَحَامَاهُ إِخْوَانٌ وَخِلَانٌ

44. Sufficient for a young man is his intellect as a friend  
If his brothers and friends avoid him

هُمَا رَاضِعَا لِبَإٍ حِكْمَةٌ وَتَقْوَى \*\* وَسَاكِنَا وَطَنٍ مَالٌ وَطُغْيَانٌ

45. Wisdom and Taqwa both suckle from one breast  
And are both residents of one land. Likewise wealth and transgression

إِذَا نَبَا بِكَرِيمٍ مَوْطِنٌ فَلَهُ \*\* وَرَاءَهُ فِي بَسِيطِ الْأَرْضِ أَوْطَانٌ

46. If a honorable man finds restriction and difficulty in his homeland, then  
for him  
Is many homelands besides it in the spacious earth

يا ظالمًا فرحًا بالعِزِّ ساعدهُ \*\* إن كنتَ في سِنَةٍ فالدَّهرُ يَقْظانُ

47. O oppressor who is joyous with the might of his authority  
If you are in a state of heedlessness, then the lessons of history will awake  
(you)

ما استَمَرَّ الظَّلمَ لو أنصفتَ أَكلُهُ \*\* وهل يَلذُّ مذاقَ المرءِ خُطبانُ

48. Oppression cannot be made pleasurable, even if you were just, to the one  
consuming it  
Does anyone enjoy the bitter taste of the colocynth?

يا أيها العالمُ المَرَضِيُّ سِيرَتُهُ \*\* أبشِرْ فانتَ بغيرِ الماءِ رِيَّانُ

49. O Scholar who is pleasing in his conduct  
Glad tiding. For you are sated/full without any water

ويا أخا الجهلِ لو أصبحتَ في لُججٍ \*\* فانتَ ما بينها لا شكَّ ظمآنُ

50. And O brother of ignorance, even if you awoke in an abyss of water  
Then you would be in it, without doubt, thirsty

لا تحسبنَّ سُرورًا دائِمًا أبدًا \*\* مَن سرَّه زَمَنٌ ساعَتُهُ أَزمانُ

51. Do not consider happiness to be lasting, perpetuate  
Whoever is happy one time will be sad other times

يا رافلاً في الشَّبابِ الرَّحِبُ مُنْتَشِياً \*\* مَن كاسِهِ هل أَصاب الرشدَ نَشوانُ

52. O one who is arrogant in his youth and is intoxicated  
From its cup. Does one who is intoxicated find guidance?

لا تَغترِرْ بِشبابٍ رائِقٍ نَصيرٍ \*\* فكم تقدَّم قبلَ الشَّيبِ شُبَّانُ

53. Do not be deluded by the splendour of youth  
For how many youth preceded old men (in death)

ويا أَخَا الشَّيْبِ لو ناصحتَ نَفْسَكَ لم \*\* يَكُن لِمِثْلِكَ في اللَّذَاتِ إِمْعَانُ

54. And O my brother elder if you advised yourself you would not  
Be like you are now (busy) in excessive pleasures

هَبِ الشَّيْبَةَ تُبْدي عُدْرَ صَاحِبِهَا \*\* ما عُدْرُ أَشْيَبَ يَسْتَهْوِيهِ شَيْطَانُ

55. The strength of youthfulness gives a young person an excuse  
But what is the excuse for the old man who has been lured by Shaytan?

كُلُّ الذُّنُوبِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُهَا \*\* إِنْ شَيَّعَ المرءَ إِخْلَاصٌ وإِيمَانُ

56. Verily Allah forgives all sins  
If the person possess sincerity and Imaan

وَكُلُّ كَسْرٍ فَإِنَّ الدِّينَ يَجْبِرُهُ \*\* وما لِكَسْرِ قِتَاةِ الدِّينِ جُبْرَانُ

57. Verily the Religion can repair every calamity  
But there is no repair for the calamity that afflicts someone's Religion

خُذْهَا سَوَائِرَ أَمْثَالٍ مُهَذَّبَةٍ \*\* فِيهَا لِمَنْ يَبْتَغِي التَّبَيَّانَ تَبْيَانُ

58. Take these well-known, polished similitudes  
Which have clarity in them for the one seeking clarification

ما ضَرَّ حَسَانَهَا والطَّبْعُ صَائِغُهَا \*\* أَنْ لَمْ يَصْنَعْهَا قَرِيعُ الشَّعْرِ حَسَانُ

59. It does not harm the author of this poem nor the nature its composition  
That it was not composed by the leader of poets: Hasaan [bin Thaabit may  
Allah be pleased with him]

**End of Text**